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4-26-2017

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STARS Citation

Graham, Germaine (2017). Much of my work ethic, time management i have learned through parenting. UCF Today, 2017-04-26. Retrieved from <https://today.ucf.edu/much-work-ethic-time-management-learned-parenting/>

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Much of My Work Ethic, Time Management I Have Learned Through Parenting

By **Germaine Graham**
UCF Forum columnist
Wednesday, April 26, 2017

I was cleaning up the house one day and stumbled across a homemade Mother's Day card that one of my children made for me. It was so beautifully written in scribbles with crayons and decorated with glitter and sparkles.

Before I knew it, I was sifting through cards from over the years that I had collected from my family. The cards were a great reminder of how much they valued the love and work I contributed to managing the family, our home and their personal lives.

This led me to curiously thinking about how transferable these parenting skills could be to any career or job.

There are lots of books on parenting but most of us learn through on-the-job training. While sitting in this pile of Mother's Day cards, there were three important things that I considered about work-related skills and leadership gained through parenting.

First, a parent is able to work past his or her limit in areas that they do not always have training or preparation. Secondly, one is able to manage multiple projects, tasks and schedules even when met with additional daily challenges. Finally, the skill of handling personal crises on a regular basis provides one with experience to handle physical emergencies with consistency and patience.

As I continued to read through the cards, I came across more and more examples of concrete work experience and job skills that could be listed on a resume. Imagine that we are able to list *all* of our job-related experiences truthfully. We might include some of the following skills:

1. **Organizational skills** – Parents are often busy with scheduling and conducting meetings, managing schedules, organizing, planning and implementing events. Additionally, one may create and implement budgets and take care of financial obligations. An often overlooked skill is working on several committees and attending meetings to represent your family and community such as PTA, school boards and city councils.

2. Crisis management – This includes providing medical assistance, counseling and emotional support.
3. Management skills – Parents have to use management skills to keep harmony and balance in the home. This is similar to a supervisor's role in a company. One may learn to be a good negotiator and mediator and understand the power of delegation.
4. Communication – This is the key to keeping everything functional. Oral and written communication in the form of letters, emails, phone calls, text messages, cards, letters and love notes. Making sure lines of communication are open internally and externally is a worthy skill.

As we say our daily goodbyes at work, I often jokingly state that I am headed to my second job. In reality, it really is another full-time job. Parenting and home management is indeed a job that we don't often stop to think about in terms of the impact and growth it can provide in our careers.

I have learned so much about my work ethic and time management through parenting and managing the home. When updating your resume this year, consider all of the skills that should be included.

Now, about those birthday cards that persistently remind me I'm getting older...

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